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Housekeepers' Chat

Thursday, January 24, 1929.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Subject: "Salads and Salad Dressings." Menu and recipes from Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. D. A.

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"Of all amusements for the mind,
From logic down to fishing,
There isn't one that you can find
So very cheap as wishing."

Do you know what I wish? That this was April, instead of January. I want to get out in the garden, and plant lettuce, and radishes. In fact, I'd much rather be sticking onion sets in freshly spaded ground than talking about recipes this morning. Do you suppose I am getting spring fever this early in the year?

Ever since breakfast this foolish jingle has been jingling through my head:

"Stirring up the soil is good for rheumatics,
Good for your liver, your lights, and lymphatics,
Even supposing that every crop fails you,
Still, the garden is good for what ails you."

There -- I wish I'd never heard of the silly thing. It's hard enough for me to keep work uppermost in my mind today without having it cluttered up with spring garden "pomes."

In talking about salads, or any other important foods, I suppose one should begin with the dietetic reasons for serving them. To sum up the advantages of salads --fresh fruit and vegetable ones-- we might say that these salads are rich sources of vitamins and minerals, and that they furnish bulk, which helps prevent constipation.

One must use judgment in selecting the salad to fit the menu. For a hearty meal, a light salad, that is, a leafy green vegetable, and French dressing is appropriate; or a leafy green vegetable, an acid fruit and French dressing.

With a light meal one wants a hearty salad with a cooked or mayonnaise dressing. Salads of vegetables, eggs, fish, cheese or meat, or a combination of these may often serve as the main dish of a light meal. A hearty salad should never be used as a side dish.

Salads are always more appetizing when they contain something succulent to crunch between the teeth. This succulence, which some people think is the chief charm of a salad, is supplied by lettuce, celery, cabbage, apples, pickles, watercress, and so forth.

All green vegetables should be served crisp. Wash them thoroughly, first in running water, or by lifting them out of two or three waters. Then wrap them in a cloth or put them in a clean paper bag. Set them on ice, or in a cool place to "crisp." The secret of a crisp, tasty salad lies in having the ingredients fresh; cold, with no drops of water clinging to the leaves; and carefully combined. When vegetables or fruit are cut up, or diced, the pieces should be large enough so the salad won't be mushy, when the dressing is added. As a general rule, the dressing should not be mixed with the other materials until just before serving. The dressing tends to wilt the vegetables, and salad greens. Of course there are exceptions to this rule, as there are to all good rules. Potato salad is one exception.

The salad dressing depends largely upon when the salad is to be served. For instance, a dinner salad, where the rest of the meal is fairly heavy, usually needs a light dressing such as French dressing. Luncheon or supper salads, or those served with party refreshments, may have the richer dressings such as mayonnaise, cooked dressing, or cream dressing.

I know a good many experienced cooks who make salad dressing in quantity, to save time. It does not take much longer to make a quart of mayonnaise than to make a pint. Mayonnaise keeps for several weeks in a cool place. I want to give you three different dressings made with plain mayonnaise as a foundation. Write them down if you wish.

Variation Number I. Mayonnaise and chile sauce, or tomato catsup. This is excellent on plain lettuce salad.

Variation Number II. Mayonnaise, chopped stuffed olives and finely chopped celery. Serve this with a crisp green salad.

Variation Number III. Add whipped cream to mayonnaise dressing, just before serving. This is very good with fruit salads.

There are many recipes in the Radio Cookbook for Mid-Winter Salads -- Novelty fruit salads, made of canned fruit or pineapple; cabbage, carrot, onion, tomato, asparagus, celery, and potato salad, besides a long list of vegetable salad combinations. There are also recipes in the cookbook for cooked salad dressing, sour cream salad dressing and a delicious cheese dressing.

There is only one question today, and that is from a listener who wants to know how to make cabbage slaw in which celery is used. To make this cabbage slaw -- get your pencils please -- to make this cabbage slaw, use 1 quart of shredded cabbage, and 1 cup of celery, cut in small pieces. Only two ingredients; 1 quart of shredded cabbage and 1 cup of celery, cut in small pieces. Select a small hard head of cabbage, cut in quarters, and wash thoroughly in cold water. Drain, wipe dry, and shred with a sharp knife. Put the cabbage in a cloth and place on ice, or in a cold place until crisp. Pour hot dressing over the crisped cabbage and celery, and stir until well mixed. Serve hot or cold.

The celery may be omitted and 1/2 cup of finely shredded green pepper can be added, or 1 cup of thinly sliced tart apple.

Today's dinner is planned especially for Tommy, the Boy Scout. Tommy's favorite foods are "wienies" and cherry pie. So I told the Menu Specialist.

"'Wienies!'" said she. "Well, if he must have 'wienies' in winter, as well as at every scout picnic all summer, let's serve them in combination with spaghetti, and tomato sauce. The Recipe Lady will tell you how it's done.

The Recipe Lady told me, and I'll tell you. The whole menu includes Wienies, Spaghetti, and Tomato (that's all one dish); Mashed Rutabaga Turnip; Winter Vegetable Salad; and Cherry Tarts.

First I'll give you the recipe for Wienies (or Frankfurts); Spaghetti, and Tomato -- seven ingredients:

1/2 pound spaghetti	1 pound Frankfurts
2 quarts water	1 cup canned tomato puree diluted with
1 teaspoon salt	2 cups water, or 2 cups tomato sauce, &
2 tablespoons chopped onion	2 tablespoons butter.

Cook the spaghetti in the water for about 30 minutes, or until tender. Drain well, and mix with the tomato. Cook the onion in the butter, until lightly browned, and mix with the spaghetti and tomato. Wash the Frankfurts, barely cover with boiling water and simmer for 10 minutes. Put the spaghetti and tomato on a hot platter, lay the hot cooked Frankfurts on top, garnish with cress or chopped parsley and serve at once.

The spaghetti mixture may be placed in a greased casserole, the cooked Frankfurts over the top, covered, and heated until the sauce bubbles. Serve from the dish.

The Winter Vegetable Salad may be a combination of carrots, peas, and celery, mixed with salad dressing. Grate some cheese over the top. Serve on lettuce, shredded cabbage, or whatever green is available.

To repeat the menu: Frankfurts, Spaghetti, and Tomato; Mashed Rutabaga Turnip; Winter Vegetable Salad; and Cherry Tarts.

Tomorrow: "The Hot School Lunch."

